The BOOK OF THE FLOWER FAIRIES

Cicely M. Barker

THE BOOK OF THE FLOWER FAIRIES

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The Book of the
FLOWER FAIRIES

POEMS AND PICTURES BY

CICELY MARY BARKER

BLACKIE & SON LIMITED
LONDON AND GLASGOW

This book consists of the three undermentioned, which have already appeared and made many friends.

Flower Fairies of the Spring
Flower Fairies of the Summer
Flower Fairies of the Autumn

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Flower Fairies of the Spring

SPRING MAGIC

The World is very old;
  But year by year
It groweth new again
  When buds appear.

The World is very old,
  And sometimes sad;
But when the daisies come
  The World is glad.

The World is very old;
  But every Spring
It groweth young again,
  And fairies sing.

SPRING

The
Snowdrop
Fairy

THE SONG OF THE SNOWDROP FAIRY

Deep sleeps the Winter, cold, wet, and grey;
Surely all the world is dead; Spring is far away.
Wait! the world shall waken; it is not dead, for lo,
The Fair Maids of February stand in the snow!

THE SONG OF THE HAZEL-CATKIN FAIRY

Like little tails of little lambs,
  On leafless twigs my catkins swing;
They dingle-dangle merrily
  Before the wakening of Spring.

Beside the pollen-laden tails
  My tiny crimson tufts you see,
The promise of the autumn nuts
  Upon the slender hazel tree.

While yet the woods lie grey and still
  I give my tidings: "Spring is near!"
One day the land shall leap to life
  With fairies calling: "Spring is HERE!"

The
Hazel-Catkin
Fairy.

The
Colt's foot
Fairy.
CMB.

THE SONG OF THE COLTSFOOT FAIRY

The winds of March are keen and cold;
I fear them not, for I am bold.

I wait not for my leaves to grow;
They follow after: they are slow.

My yellow blooms are brave and bright;
I greet the Spring with all my might.

THE SONG OF THE DEAD-NETTLE FAIRY

Through sun and rain, the country lane,
The field, the road, are my abode.
Though leaf and bud be splashed with mud,
Who cares? Not I!—I see the sky,
The kindly sun, the wayside fun
Of tramping folk who smoke and joke,
The bairns who heed my dusty weed
(No sting have I to make them cry),
And truth to tell, they love me well.
My brothers, White, and Yellow bright,
Are finer chaps than I, perhaps;
Who cares? Not I! So now good-bye.

The
Dead-nettle
Fairy
C.M.B.

The
Celandine
Fairy.
CMB.

THE SONG OF THE CELANDINE FAIRY

Before the hawthorn leaves unfold,
Or buttercups put forth their gold,
By every sunny footpath shine
The stars of Lesser Celandine.

THE SONG OF THE WILLOW-CATKIN FAIRY

The people call me Palm, they do;
They call me Pussy-Willow too.
And when I 'm full in bloom, the bees
Come humming round my yellow trees.

The people trample round about
And spoil the little trees, and shout;
My shiny twigs are thin and brown:
The people pull and break them down.
To keep a Holy Feast, they say,
They take my pretty boughs away.
I should be glad—I should not mind—
If only people weren't unkind.

Oh, you may pick a piece, you may
(So dear and silky, soft and grey);
But if you 're rough and greedy, why
You 'll make the little fairies cry.

(This catkin is the flower of the Sallow Willow.)

The
Willow-Catkin
Fairy.
CMB.

The
Groundsel
Fairy.

THE SONG OF THE GROUNDSEL FAIRY

If dicky-birds should buy and sell
In tiny markets, I can tell
The way they 'd spend their money.
They 'd ask the price of cherries sweet,
They 'd choose the pinkest worms for meat,
And common Groundsel for a treat,
Though you might think it funny.

Love me not, or love me well;
That 's the way they 'd buy and sell.

THE SONG OF THE WINDFLOWER FAIRY

While human-folk slumber,
The fairies espy
Stars without number
Sprinkling the sky.

The Winter's long sleeping,
Like night-time, is done;
But day-stars are leaping
To welcome the sun.

Star-like they sprinkle
The wildwood with light;
Countless they twinkle—
The Windflowers white!

("Windflower" is another name for the Wood Anemone.)

The
Wind
~Flower
Fairy.
CMB

The
Shepherd's-Purse
Fairy.
CMB.

THE SONG OF THE SHEPHERD'S-PURSE FAIRY

Though I 'm poor to human eyes
Really I am rich and wise.
Every tiny flower I shed
Leaves a heart-shaped purse instead.

In each purse is wealth indeed—
Every coin a living seed.
Sow the seed upon the earth—
Living plants shall spring to birth.

Silly people's purses hold
Lifeless silver, clinking gold;
But you cannot grow a pound
From a farthing in the ground.

Money may become a curse:
Give me then my Shepherd's Purse.

THE SONG OF THE DAISY FAIRY

Come to me and play with me,
I 'm the babies' flower;
Make a necklace gay with me,
Spend the whole long day with me,
Till the sunset hour.

I must say Good-night, you know
Till to-morrow's playtime;
Close my petals tight, you know,
Shut the red and white, you know,
Sleeping till the daytime.

The
Daisy
Fairy.
CMB.

The
Dandelion
Fairy.
CMB.

THE SONG OF THE DANDELION FAIRY

Here 's the Dandelion's rhyme:
  See my leaves with tooth-like edges;
Blow my clocks to tell the time;
  See me flaunting by the hedges,
In the meadow, in the lane,
  Gay and naughty in the garden;
Pull me up—I grow again,
  Asking neither leave nor pardon.
Sillies, what are you about
  With your spades and hoes of iron?
You can never drive me out—
  Me, the dauntless Dandelion!

THE SONG OF THE DAFFODIL FAIRY

I 'm everyone's darling: the blackbird and starling
Are shouting about me from blossoming boughs;
For I, the Lent Lily, the Daffy-down-dilly,
Have heard through the country the call to arouse.
The orchards are ringing with voices a-singing
The praise of my petticoat, praise of my gown;
The children are playing, and hark! they are saying
That Daffy-down-dilly is come up to town!

The
Daffodil
Fairy

The
Dog-Violet
Fairy.
CMB.

THE SONG OF THE DOG-VIOLET FAIRY

The wren and robin hop around;
The Primrose-maids my neighbours be;
The sun has warmed the mossy ground;
Where Spring has come, I too am found:
The Cuckoo's call has wakened me!

THE SONG OF THE PRIMROSE FAIRY

The Primrose opens wide in spring;
Her scent is sweet and good:
It smells of every happy thing
In sunny lane and wood.
I have not half the skill to sing
And praise her as I should.

She 's dear to folk throughout the land;
In her is nothing mean:
She freely spreads on every hand
Her petals pale and clean.
And though she 's neither proud nor grand,
She is the Country Queen.

The
Primrose
Fairy.
CMB.

The
Lady's
~Smock
Fairy.
CMB

THE SONG OF THE LADY'S SMOCK FAIRY

Where the grass is damp and green,
Where the shallow streams are flowing,
Where the cowslip buds are showing,
I am seen.

Dainty as a fairy's frock,
White or mauve, of elfin sewing,
'T is the meadow-maiden growing—
Lady's Smock.

THE SONG OF THE LARCH FAIRY

Sing a song of Larch trees
  Loved by fairy-folk;
Dark stands the pinewood,
  Bare stands the oak,
But the Larch is dressed and trimmed
  Fit for fairy-folk!

Sing a song of Larch trees,
  Sprays that swing aloft,
Pink tufts, and tassels
  Grass-green and soft:
All to please the little elves
  Singing songs aloft!

The
Larch
Fairy.

The
Bluebell
Fairy.
CMB.

THE SONG OF THE BLUEBELL FAIRY

My hundred thousand bells of blue,
The splendour of the Spring,
They carpet all the woods anew
With royalty of sapphire hue;
The Primrose is the Queen, 't is true,
But surely I am King!
Ah yes,
The peerless Woodland King!

Loud, loud the thrushes sing their song;
The bluebell woods are wide;
My stems are tall and straight and strong;
From ugly streets the children throng,
They gather armfuls, great and long,
Then home they troop in pride—
Ah yes,
With laughter and with pride!

(This is the Wild Hyacinth. The Bluebell of Scotland is the Harebell.)

THE SONG OF THE STITCHWORT FAIRY

I am brittle-stemmed and slender,
But the grass is my defender.

On the banks where grass is long,
I can stand erect and strong.

All my mass of starry faces
Looking up from wayside places,

From the thick and tangled grass,
Gives you greeting as you pass.

(A prettier name for Stitchwort is Starwort, but it is not so often used.)

The
Stitchwort
Fairy.

The
Wood Sorrel
Fairy.

THE SONG OF THE WOOD-SORREL FAIRY

In the wood the trees are tall,
Up and up they tower;
You and I are very small—
Fairy-child and flower.

Bracken stalks are shooting high,
Far and far above us;
We are little, you and I,
But the fairies love us.

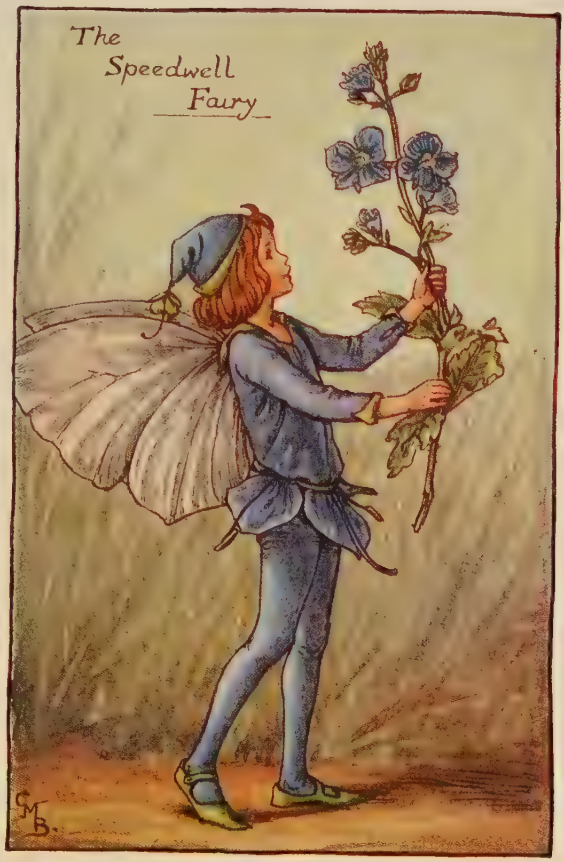
THE SONG OF THE SPEEDWELL FAIRY

Clear blue are the skies;
My petals are blue;
As beautiful, too,
As bluest of eyes.

The heavens are high;
By the field-path I grow
Where wayfarers go,
And "Good speed," say I;

"See, here is a prize
Of wonderful worth:
A weed of the earth,
As blue as the skies!"

(There are many kinds of Speedwell: this is the Germander.)


The
Speedwell
Fairy
CMB.

The
Lords-and-Ladies
Fairy.
CMB.

THE SONG OF THE LORDS-AND-LADIES FAIRY

Here's the song of Lords-and-Ladies (in the
damp and shade he grows):
I have neither bells nor petals, like the foxglove
or the rose.
Through the length and breadth of England,
many flowers you may see—
Petals, bells, and cups in plenty—but there's no
one else like me.

In the hot-house dwells my kinsman, Arum-lily,
white and fine;
I am not so tall and stately, but the quaintest
hood is mine;
And my glossy leaves are handsome; I've a
spike to make you stare;
And my berries are a glory in September.
(BUT BEWARE!)

(The Wild Arum has other names besides Lords-and-Ladies, such as Cuckoo-Pint and Jack-in-the-Pulpit.)

THE SONG OF THE COWSLIP FAIRY

The land is full of happy birds
And flocks of sheep and grazing herds.

I hear the songs of larks that fly
Above me in the breezy sky.

I hear the little lambkins bleat;
My honey-scent is rich and sweet.

Beneath the sun I dance and play
In April and in merry May.

The grass is green as green can be;
The children shout at sight of me.

The
Cowslip
Fairy.

The
Heart'sease
Fairy.
C M B.

THE SONG OF THE HEART'S-EASE FAIRY

Like the richest velvet (I 've heard the fairies tell)
Grow the handsome pansies within the garden wall;
When you praise their beauty, remember me as well—
Think of little Heart's-ease, the brother of them all!

Come away and seek me when the year is young,
Through the open ploughlands beyond the garden wall;
Many names are pretty and many songs are sung:
Mine—because I 'm Heart's-ease—are prettiest of all!

(An old lady says that when she was a little girl the children's name for the Heart's-ease or Wild Pansy was Jump-up-and-kiss-me!)

THE SONG OF THE MAY FAIRY

My buds, they cluster small and green;
The sunshine gaineth heat:
Soon shall the hawthorn tree be clothed
As with a snowy sheet.

O magic sight, the hedge is white,
My scent is very sweet;
And lo, where I am come indeed,
The Spring and Summer meet.

The
May
Fairy.
CMB

Flower Fairies of the Summer

PLANTAIN AND MOON-DAISY DANCING TOGETHER,
ALL THROUGH THE BEAUTIFUL SUNSHINY WEATHER.

SPRING GOES, SUMMER COMES

The little darling, Spring,
Has run away;
The sunshine grew too hot for her to stay.

She kissed her sister, Summer,
And she said:
"When I am gone, you must be queen instead."

Now reigns the Lady Summer,
Round whose feet
A thousand fairies flock with blossoms sweet.

SUMMER

The
Buttercup
Fairy.

THE SONG OF THE BUTTERCUP FAIRY

'T is I whom children love the best;
My wealth is all for them;
For them is set each glossy cup
Upon each sturdy stem.

O little playmates whom I love!
The sky is summer-blue,
And meadows full of buttercups
Are spread abroad for you.

THE SONG OF THE HERB ROBERT FAIRY

Little Herb Robert,
  Bright and small,
Peeps from the bank
  Or the old stone wall.

Little Herb Robert,
  His leaf turns red;
He 's wild geranium,
  So it is said.

The
Herb Robert
Fairy.
CMB

The
Sorrel
Fairy.

THE SONG OF THE SORREL FAIRY

Like ladies clad in gold and white
The ox-eye daisies stand;
And by them riseth up the height
Of Sorrel near at hand.
Who keepeth watch like trusty knight
Throughout the meadow-land.

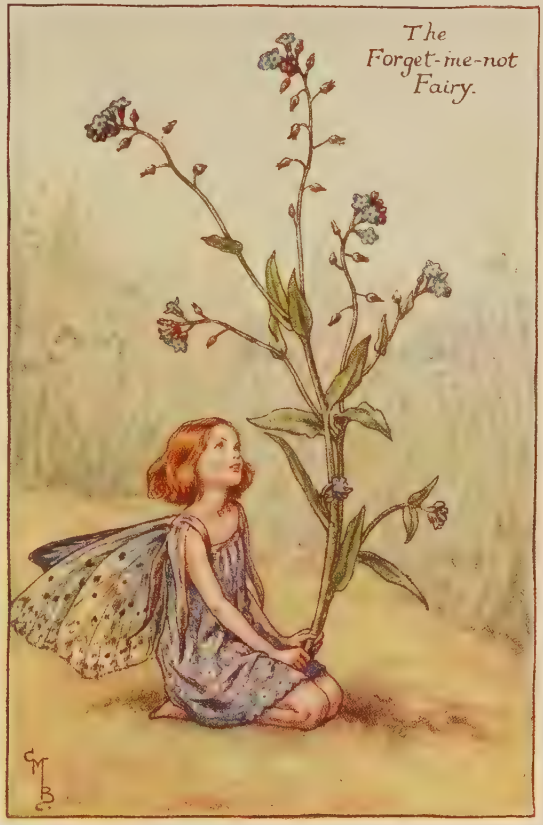
O coral red of Sorrel's head!
O banner that I hold
Above the meadow-grass outspread,
And daisies white and gold
Until my dangling seeds are shed,
And summer groweth old!

THE SONG OF THE FORGET-ME-NOT FAIRY

So small, so blue, in grassy places
My flowers raise
Their tiny faces.

By streams my bigger sisters grow,
And smile in gardens,
In a row.

I 've never seen a garden plot;
But though I 'm small,
Forget me not!


The
Forget-me-not
Fairy.
CMB

The
Poppy
Fairy.

THE SONG OF THE POPPY FAIRY

The green wheat 's a-growing,
The lark sings on high;
In scarlet silk a-glowing,
Here stand I.

The wheat 's turning yellow,
Ripening for sheaves;
I hear the little fellow
Who scares the bird-thieves.

Now the harvest 's ended,
The wheat-field is bare;
But still, red and splendid,
I am there.

THE SONG OF THE FOXGLOVE FAIRY

"Foxglove, Foxglove,
What do you see?"
The cool green woodland,
The fat velvet bee:
Hey, Mr. Bumble,
I've honey here for thee!

"Foxglove, Foxglove,
What see you now?"
The soft summer moonlight
On bracken, grass, and bough
And all the fairies dancing
As only they know how.

The
Foxglove
Fairy.
M
B.

The
Wild Rose
Fairy.
CMB.

THE SONG OF THE WILD ROSE FAIRY

I am the queen whom everybody knows:
I am the English Rose;
As light and free as any Jenny Wren,
As dear to Englishmen;
As joyous as a Robin Redbreast's tune,
I scent the air of June;
My buds are rosy as a baby's cheek;
I have one word to speak,
One word which is my secret and my song,
'T is "England, England, England" all day long.

THE SONG OF THE CONVOLVULUS FAIRY

Wreathing the hedges
I ramble and twine;
The roadside is tangled
With garlands of mine.

I 'm little Convolvulus,
Bindweed as well;
I know all the secrets
The fairies can tell.

I spread a pink carpet
For lightest of feet;
I smell like blanc-mange
For princesses to eat.

The
Convolvulus
Fairy.
CMB

The
White Clover
Fairy.
CMB

THE SONG OF THE WHITE CLOVER FAIRY

I 'm little White Clover, kind and clean;
Look at my threefold leaves so green;
Hark to the buzzing of hungry bees:
" Give us your honey, Clover, please! "

Yes, little bees, and welcome, too!
My honey is good, and meant for you!

THE SONG OF THE HONEYSUCKLE FAIRY

The lane is deep, the bank is steep,
  The tangled hedge is high;
And clinging, twisting, up I creep,
  And climb towards the sky.
O Honeysuckle, mounting high!
O Woodbine, climbing to the sky!

The people in the lane below
  Look up and see me there,
Where I my honey-trumpets blow,
  Whose sweetness fills the air.
O Honeysuckle, waving there!
O Woodbine, scenting all the air!

The
Honeysuckle
Fairy.

The
Bird's Foot Trefoil
Fairy.
CMB

THE SONG OF THE BIRD'S-FOOT TREFOIL FAIRY

Here I dance in a dress like flames,
And laugh to think of my comical names.
Hoppetty hop, with nimble legs!
Some folks call me *Bacon and Eggs!*
While other people, it 's really true,
Tell me I 'm *Cuckoo's Stockings* too!
Over the hill I skip and prance;
I 'm *Lady's Slipper*, and so I dance,
Not like a lady, grand and proud,
But to the grasshoppers' chirping loud.
My pods are shaped like a dicky's toes:
That is what *Bird's-Foot Trefoil* shows;
This is my name which grown-ups use,
But children may call me what they choose.

THE SONG OF THE NIGHTSHADE FAIRY

My name is Nightshade, also Bittersweet;
Ah, little folk, be wise!
Hide you your hands behind you when we meet,
Turn you away your eyes.
My flowers you shall not pick, nor berries eat,
For in them poison lies.

(Though this is so poisonous, it is not the Deadly Nightshade, but the Woody Nightshade. The berries turn red a little later on.)

The
Nightshade
Fairy.

The
White Campion
Fairy.
C M B.

THE SONG OF THE WHITE CAMPION FAIRY

The Lady Summer now doth reign
  In rich and queenly state,
And I among her royal train
  Within her meadows wait.
O little heed have I for fame,
  And little do I care
If few do know me by my name
  And none do call me rare.
No fairer sight, no purer white,
  Than this of mine is seen;
I stand in spotless livery
  And serve my Lady Queen.

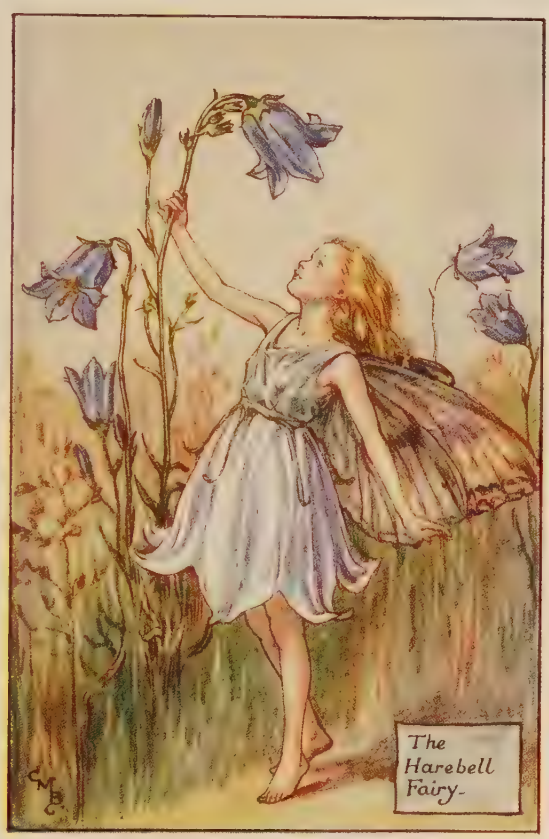
THE SONG OF THE HAREBELL FAIRY

O bells, on stems so thin and fine!
No human ear
Your sound can hear,
O lightly chiming bells of mine!

When dim and dewy twilight falls,
Then comes the time
When harebells chime
For fairy feasts and fairy balls.

They tinkle while the fairies play,
With dance and song,
The whole night long,
Till daybreak wakens, cold and grey,
And elfin music fades away.

(The Harebell is the Bluebell of Scotland.)


The
Harebell
Fairy.

The
Heather
Fairy.

THE SONG OF THE HEATHER FAIRY

"Ho, Heather, ho! From south to north
Spread now your royal purple forth!
Ho, jolly one! From east to west,
The moorland waiteth to be dressed!"

I come, I come! With footsteps sure
I run to clothe the waiting moor;
From heath to heath I leap and stride
To fling my bounty far and wide.

(The heather in the picture is bell heather, or heath; it is different from the common heather which is also called ling.)

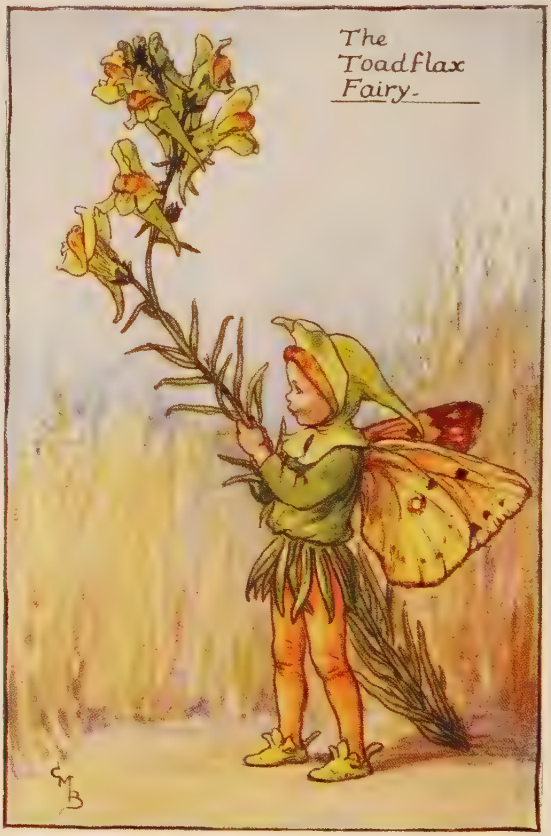
THE SONG OF THE YARROW FAIRY

Among the harebells and the grass,
The grass all feathery with seed,
I dream, and see the people pass:
They pay me little heed.

And yet the children (so I think),
In spite of other flowers more dear,
Would miss my clusters white and pink,
If I should disappear.

(The Yarrow has another name, Milfoil, which means Thousand Leaf; because her leaves are all made up of very many tiny little leaves.)

The
Yarrow
Fairy.
CMB


The
Toadflax
Fairy.
CMB

THE SONG OF THE TOADFLAX FAIRY

The children, the children, they call me funny names,
They take me for their darling and partner in their games;
They pinch my flowers' yellow mouths, to open them and close,
Saying, *Snap-Dragon!*
Toadflax!
or, *darling Bunny-Nose!*

The Toadflax, the Toadflax, with lemon-coloured spikes,
With funny friendly faces that everybody likes,
Upon the grassy hillside and hedgerow bank it grows,
And it 's *Snap-Dragon!*
Toadflax!
and *darling Bunny-Nose!*

THE SONG OF THE SCABIOUS FAIRY

Like frilly cushions full of pins
For tiny dames and fairykins;

Or else like dancers decked with gems,
My flowers sway on slender stems.

They curtsey in the meadow grass,
And nod to butterflies who pass.

The
Scabious
Fairy.
CMB.

The
Thistle
Fairy.

THE SONG OF THE THISTLE FAIRY

I am the soldier of the field,
All armed with swords and spears;
Beware the weapons which I wield,
Unless you look for tears.

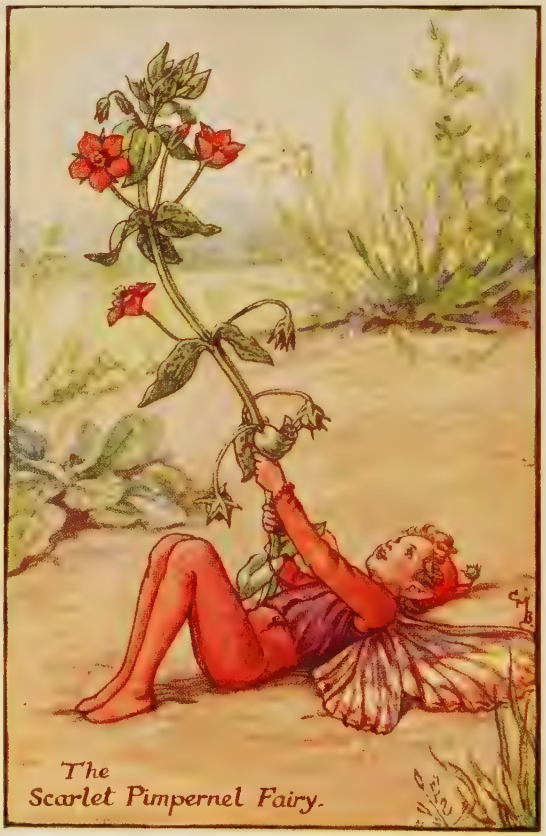
The prickles of my leaves and stem
Can stab as needles do;
But, if you never handle them,
They 'll do no harm to you.

And presently my purple crown,
Which looks so brave to-day,
Shall turn to softest thistle-down
And lightly float away.

THE SONG OF THE WILD THYME FAIRY

O people of the town,
Come seek me on the down,
The sunny open hill-top, wide and free,
Where the turf beneath your feet
Is good and clean and sweet,
The air is swept with breezes from the sea;
And you who breathe my scent,
Shall find your heart's content
For ever in the land of downs with me.

The Wild Thyme Fairy.
CMB



The
Scarlet Pimpernel Fairy.

THE SONG OF THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL FAIRY

By the furrowed field I lie,
Calling to the passers-by:
"If the weather you would tell,
Look at Scarlet Pimpernel."

When the day is warm and fine,
I unfold these flowers of mine;
Ah, but you must look for rain
When I shut them up again!

Weather-glasses on the walls
Hang in wealthy people's halls:
Though I lie where cart-wheels pass,
I'm the Poor Man's Weather-Glass!

THE SONG OF THE GREATER KNAPWEED FAIRY

Oh, please, little children, take note of my name:
To call me a thistle is really a shame:
I 'm harmless old Knapweed, who grows on the chalk,
I never will prick you when out for your walk.

Yet I should be sorry, yes, sorry indeed,
To cut your small fingers and cause them to bleed;
So bid me Good Morning when out for your walk,
And mind how you pull at my very tough stalk.

(Sometimes this Knapweed is called Hardhead; and he has a brother, the little Knapweed, whose flower is not quite like this.)

The
Greater Knapweed
Fairy.
CMB.

The
Traveller's Joy
Fairy.
CMB

THE SONG OF THE TRAVELLER'S JOY FAIRY

Traveller, traveller, tramping by
To the seaport town where the big ships lie,
See, I have built a shady bower
To shelter you from the sun or shower.
Rest for a bit, then on, my boy!
Luck go with you, and Traveller's Joy!

Traveller, traveller, tramping home
From foreign places beyond the foam,
See, I have hung out a white festoon
To greet the lad with the dusty shoon.
Somewhere a lass looks out for a boy:
Luck be with you, and Traveller's Joy!

(Traveller's Joy is Wild Clematis; and when the flowers are over, it becomes a mass of silky fluff, and then we call it Old Man's Beard.)

THE SONG OF THE RAGWORT FAIRY

Now is the prime of Summer past,
  Farewell she soon must say;
But yet my gold you may behold
  By every grassy way.

And what though Autumn comes apace,
  And brings a shorter day?
Still stand I here, your eyes to cheer,
  In gallant gold array.

The
Ragwort
Fairy.
CMB

Flower Fairies of the Autumn

SEE ABOVE THE FAIRY'S
HEAD, GUELDER-ROSE'S
BERRIES RED.

THE BERRY-QUEEN

An elfin rout,
With berries laden,
Throngs round about
A merry maiden.

Red-gold her gown;
Sun-tanned is she;
She wears a crown
Of bryony.

The sweet Spring came,
And lovely Summer;
Guess, then, her name—
This latest-comer!

AUTUMN

The
Mountain Ash
Fairy.

THE SONG OF THE MOUNTAIN ASH FAIRY

They thought me, once, a magic tree
  Of wondrous lucky charm,
And at the door they planted me
  To keep the house from harm.

They have no fear of witchcraft now,
  Yet here am I to-day;
I 've hung my berries from the bough,
  And merrily I say:

"Come, all you blackbirds, bring your wives,
  Your sons and daughters too;
The finest banquet of your lives
  Is here prepared for you."

(The Mountain Ash's other name is Rowan; and it used to be called Witchentree and Witch-wood too.)

THE SONG OF THE LORDS-AND-LADIES FAIRY

Fairies, when you lose your way,
From the dance returning,
In the darkest undergrowth
See my candles burning!
These shall make the pathway plain,
Homeward to your beds again.

(These are the berries of the Wild Arum, which has many other names, and has a flower like a hood in the Spring. The berries are not to be eaten; please do not eat anything in this book except those which say that you may; they may be good for birds but not for boys and girls.)

The
Lords-and-Ladies
Fairy

The
Wayfaring-Tree
Fairy.
MB

THE SONG OF THE WAYFARING TREE FAIRY

My shoots are tipped with buds as dusty-grey
As ancient pilgrims toiling on their way.

Like Thursday's child with far to go, I stand,
All ready for the road to Fairyland;

With hood, and bag, and shoes, my name to suit,
And in my hand my gorgeous-tinted fruit.

THE SONG OF THE ROBIN'S PINCUSHION FAIRY

People come and look at me,
Asking who this rogue may be?
—Up to mischief, they suppose,
Perched upon the briar-rose.

I am nothing else at all
But a fuzzy-wuzzy ball,
Like a little bunch of flame;
I will tell you how I came:

First there came a naughty fly,
Pricked the rose, and made her cry;
Out I popped to see about it;
This is true, so do not doubt it!

The Robin's Pincushion
Fairy.

CMB
The
Elderberry
Fairy

THE SONG OF THE ELDERBERRY FAIRY

Tread quietly:
O people, hush!
—For don't you see
A spotted thrush,
One thrush or two,
Or even three,
In every laden elder-tree?

They pull and lug,
They flap and push,
They peck and tug
To strip the bush;
They have forsaken
Snail and slug;
Unseen I watch them, safe and snug!

(These berries do us no harm, though they don't taste very nice. Country people make wine from them; and boys make whistles from elder stems.)

THE SONG OF THE BURDOCK FAIRY

Wee little hooks on each brown little bur,
(Mind where you 're going, O Madam and Sir!)
How they will cling to your skirt-hem and stocking!
Hear how the Burdock is laughing and mocking:
Try to get rid of me, try as you will,
Shake me and scold me, I 'll stick to you still,
I 'll stick to you still!

The Burdock
Fairy.

The
Acorn Fairy.

THE SONG OF THE ACORN FAIRY

To English folk the mighty oak
  Is England's noblest tree;
Its hard-grained wood is strong and good
  As English hearts can be.
And would you know how oak-trees grow,
  The secret may be told:
You do but need to plant for seed
  One acorn in the mould;
For even so, long years ago,
  Were born the oaks of old.

THE SONG OF THE DOGWOOD FAIRY

I was a warrior
When, long ago,
Arrows of Dogwood
Flew from the bow.
Passers-by, nowadays,
Go up and down,
Not one remembering
My old renown.

Yet when the Autumn sun
Colours the trees,
Should you come seeking me,
Know me by these:
Bronze leaves and crimson leaves,
Soon to be shed;
Dark little berries,
On stalks turning red.

(Cornel is another name for Dogwood; and Dogwood has nothing to do with dogs. It used to be Dag-wood or Dagger-wood, which, with another name, Prickwood, show that it was used to make sharp-pointed things.)

The
Dogwood
Fairy.

The
Black Bryony
Fairy.

THE SONG OF THE BLACK BRYONY FAIRY

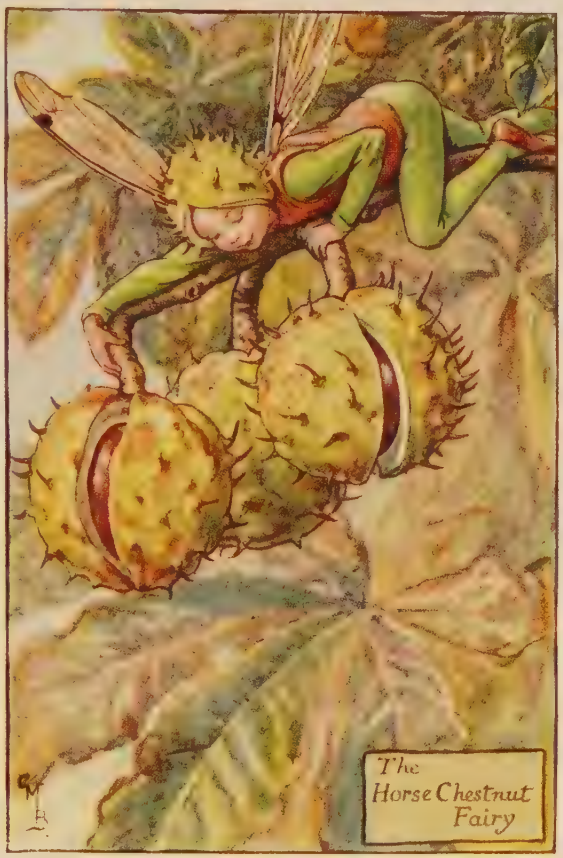
Bright and wild and beautiful
For the Autumn festival,
I will hang from tree to tree
Wreaths and ropes of Bryony,
To the glory and the praise
Of the sweet September days.

(Usually there is nothing black to be seen about Bryony, though sometimes towards winter its leaves turn a dark bronze; but people do say it has a black root, and this may be true. You would need to dig it up to find out. It used to be thought a cure for freckles.)

THE SONG OF THE HORSE CHESTNUT FAIRY

My conkers, they are shiny things,
And things of mighty joy,
And they are like the wealth of kings
To every little boy;
I see the upturned face of each
Who stands around the tree:
He sees his treasure out of reach,
But does not notice *me*.

For love of conkers bright and brown,
He pelts the tree all day;
With stones and sticks he knocks them down,
And thinks it jolly play.
But sometimes I, the elf, am hit
Until I 'm black and blue;
O laddies, only wait a bit,
I 'll shake them down to you!


The
Horse Chestnut
Fairy

The Blackberry Fairy.
CMB

THE SONG OF THE BLACKBERRY FAIRY

My berries cluster black and thick
For rich and poor alike to pick.

I 'll tear your dress, and cling, and tease,
And scratch your hands and arms and knees.

I 'll stain your fingers and your face,
And then I 'll laugh at your disgrace.

But when the bramble-jelly 's made,
You 'll find your trouble well repaid.

(Here is something you may eat!)

THE SONG OF THE NIGHTSHADE BERRY FAIRY

"You see my berries, how they gleam and glow,
Clear ruby-red, and green, and orange-yellow;
Do they not tempt you, fairies, dangling so?"
The fairies shake their heads and answer "No!
You are a crafty fellow!"
"What, won't you try them? There is naught to pay!
Why should you think my berries poisoned things?
You fairies may look scared and fly away—
The children will believe me when I say
My fruit is fruit for kings!"
But all good fairies cry in anxious haste,
"O children, do not taste!"

(You must believe the good fairies, though the berries look nice. This is the Woody Nightshade, which has purple and yellow flowers in the summer.)

The
Nightshade berry
Fairy.

The
Rose Hip
Fairy.

THE SONG OF THE ROSE HIP FAIRY

Cool dewy morning,
  Blue sky at noon,
White mist at evening,
  And large yellow moon;

Blackberries juicy
  For staining of lips;
And scarlet, O scarlet
  The Wild Rose Hips!

Gay as a gipsy
  All Autumn long,
Here on the hedge-top
  This is my song.

THE SONG OF THE YEW FAIRY

Here, on the dark and solemn Yew,
A marvel may be seen,
Where waxen berries, pink and new,
Appear amid the green.

I sit a-dreaming in the tree,
So old and yet so new;
One hundred years, or two, or three
Are little to the Yew.

I think of bygone centuries,
And seem to see anew
The archers face their enemies
With bended bows of Yew.

The Yew Fairy.
CMB

The
Crab-Apple
Fairy.
CMB

THE SONG OF THE CRAB-APPLE FAIRY

Crab-apples, Crab-apples, out in the wood,
Little and bitter, yet little and good!
The apples in orchards, so rosy and fine,
Are children of wild little apples like mine.

The branches are laden, and droop to the ground;
The fairy-fruit falls in a circle around;
Now all you good children, come gather them up:
They 'll make you sweet jelly to spread when you sup.

One little apple I 'll catch for myself;
I 'll stew it, and strain it, to store on a shelf
In four or five acorn cups, locked with a key
In a cupboard of mine at the root of the tree.

THE SONG OF THE SPINDLE BERRY FAIRY

See the rosy-berried Spindle
All to sunset colours turning,
Till the thicket seems to kindle,
Just as though the trees were burning.
While my berries split and show
Orange-coloured seeds aglow,
One by one my leaves must fall:
Soon the wind will take them all.
Soon must fairies shut their eyes
For the Winter's hushabies;
But, before the Autumn goes,
Spindle turns to flame and rose!

The
Spindle Berry
Fairy

The
Hazel-nut
Fairy

THE SONG OF THE HAZEL-NUT FAIRY

Slowly, slowly, growing
While I watched them well,
See, my nuts have ripened;
Now I 've news to tell.
I will tell the Squirrel,
"Here 's a store for you;
But, kind Sir, remember
The Nuthatch likes them too."

I will tell the Nuthatch,
"Now, Sir, you may come;
Choose your nuts and crack them,
But leave the children some."
I will tell the children,
"You may take your share;
Come and fill your pockets,
But leave a few to spare."

THE SONG OF THE WHITE BRYONY FAIRY

Have you seen at Autumn-time
  Fairy-folk adorning
All the hedge with necklaces,
  Early in the morning?
Green beads and red beads
  Threaded on a vine:
Is there any handiwork
  Prettier than mine?

(This Bryony has other names—White Vine, Wild Vine, and Red-berried Bryony. It has tendrils to climb with, which Black Bryony has not, and its leaves and berries are quite different. They say its root is white, as the other's is black.)

The White Bryony
Fairy.

The
Beechnut
Fairy.

THE SONG OF THE BEECHNUT FAIRY

O the great and happy Beech,
  Glorious and tall!
Changing with the changing months,
  Lovely in them all:

Lovely in the leafless time,
  Lovelier in green;
Loveliest with golden leaves
  And the sky between,

When the nuts are falling fast,
  Thrown by little me—
Tiny things to patter down
  From a forest tree!

(You may eat these.)

THE SONG OF THE HAWTHORN FAIRY

These thorny branches bore the May
So many months ago,
That when the scattered petals lay
Like drifts of fallen snow,
"This is the story's end," you said;
But O, not half was told!
For see, my haws are here instead,
And hungry birdies shall be fed
On these when days are cold.

The
Hawthorn Fairy.

The
Privet Fairy.

THE SONG OF THE PRIVET FAIRY

Here in the wayside hedge I stand,
And look across the open land;
Rejoicing thus, unclipped and free,
I think how you must envy me,
O garden Privet, prim and neat,
With tidy gravel at your feet!

(In early summer the Privet has spikes of very strongly-scented white flowers.)

THE SONG OF THE SLOE FAIRY

When Blackthorn blossoms leap to sight,
They deck the hedge with starry light,
In early Spring
When rough winds blow,
Each promising
A purple sloe.

And now is Autumn here, and lo,
The Blackthorn bears the purple sloe!
But ah, how much
Too sharp these plums,
Until the touch
Of Winter comes!

(The sloe is a wild plum. One bite will set your teeth on edge until it has been mellowed by frost; but it is not poisonous.)

The
Sloe Fairy.
CMB

The
Old-Man's-Beard
Fairy.

THE SONG OF THE OLD-MAN'S-BEARD FAIRY

This is where the little elves
Cuddle down to hide themselves;
Into fluffy beds they creep,
Say good-night, and go to sleep.

(Old-Man's Beard is Wild Clematis; its flowers are called Traveller's Joy. This silky fluff belongs to the seeds.)

THE SONG OF THE HOLLY FAIRY

O, I am green in Winter-time,
When other trees are brown;
Of all the trees (so saith the rhyme)
The holly bears the crown.
December days are drawing near
When I shall come to town,
And carol-boys go singing clear
Of all the trees (O hush and hear!)
The holly bears the crown!

For who so well-beloved and merry
As the scarlet Holly Berry?

The
Holly
Fairy.
CMB